

THE COURTHOUSE

Rapid growth and community development marked the period following 1869. Upon selection of Powhatan as county seat, three commissioners were selected to choose the site for a new courthouse. The first courthouse, completed in 1873, burned in 1885. Due to the commission's foresight of buying a fireproof vault, county records were saved, some dating to 1813.

The citizens erected a second two-story courthouse, built with brick salvaged from the first courthouse, and additional new brick for the facade, on the same foundation, laying the cornerstone on May 10, 1888.

In 1963, voters consolidated two county seats into one at Walnut Ridge, and in 1966, county officials departed Powhatan for the last time. In 1968, Governor Winthrop Rockefeller sent a team of specialists from Williamsburg, Virginia, to visit and evaluate the building's potential. Shortly thereafter, the Lawrence County Development Council and the Powhatan Courthouse Restoration Committee formed to raise funds for restoration.

The courthouse was placed on the *National Register of Historic Places* in February of 1970. Restoration began in January of 1971 and ended in 1973.

Powhatan Courthouse became a state park in 1974. *Arkansas State Parks* has continued restoration and interpretation of the site, including a major restoration and exhibit installation in 2005.

Exhibits in the restored courthouse illustrate the history of Lawrence County and the judicial system. One room serves as the park visitor center.

THE JAIL

Just prior to construction of the first Powhatan courthouse in 1873, a jail of native limestone was built.

When conditions degenerated and security problems climaxed, the jail was abandoned. The structure has since been used as a movie theater, a canning kitchen, a honey processing plant, and an auto repair garage. Named to the *National Register of Historic Places* in 1976, Arkansas State Parks restored the jail in 1990.

THE FICKLIN-IMBODEN HOUSE AND THE COMMERCIAL BUILDING

The ferry crossing and the busy river traffic brought growth to Powhatan. In the mid to late nineteenth century the area included many commercial and residential buildings.

The Ficklin-Imboden House is the earliest example of residential architecture in Lawrence County. The log house blends Tidewater South and Midland building styles. The log cabin, and its period furnishings, provide a look into an earlier time.

The 1887 Victorian panel brick Commerical Building, rests in the former center of commerce of this once thriving riverport. At different times the building housed a telephone system that served much of the county, an apothecary (drug store), wagon factory, attorney's office, general store, residence and post office. This is the only remaining commercial building on Powhatan's original town site.

Both buildings are on the *National Register of Historic Places*.

POWHATAN MALE & FEMALE ACADEMY

This unusual two-room school was built in 1889 and restored in 2001, and features some of its original furnishings. Teachers and students can experience "A School Day of 1900," one of the highlights of the park, held in the restored classroom of this early Arkansas school.

FACILITIES

Powhatan Historic State Park operates from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday, and from 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. on Sunday. The park provides guided tours of the courthouse, jail, telephone exchange building, Ficklin-Imboden Log House, and the Powhatan Male & Female Academy. The Ficklin-Imboden House, 1888 Courthouse and Male & Female Academy are ADA accessible.

In 2011, Arkansas State Parks and the Arkansas History Commission opened the Northeast Arkansas Regional Archives (NEARA) to house the extensive records once housed in the courthouse. The Archives are open for research from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday.

LOCATION

From Hoxie, travel 8 miles north on U.S. 63 to Black Rock, then 2 miles south on Arkansas Highway 25.

From State Highway 167 at Cave City, travel 28 miles east on State Highways 230 and 25 to the park.

From Hardy, travel U.S. 63 south 30 miles to Black Rock, then south on State Highway 25, 2 miles to Powhatan.

For further information on park programs, fees or hours, contact:

Powhatan Historic State Park

P.O. Box 93

Powhatan, AR 72458

Telephone: (870) 878-0032 (Office)

(870) 878-6765 (Courthouse)

e-mail: powhatan@arkansas.com

www.HistoryStateParks.com

NOTICE: To preserve scenic beauty and ecology, fences and warning signs have not been installed in some park locations. Caution and supervision of your children are required while visiting these areas.

For information on Arkansas's other fine state parks, contact.

Arkansas State Parks

One Capitol Mall, 4A-900

Little Rock, AR 72201

Telephone: (501) 682-1191

www.ArkansasStateParks.com



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Arkansas State Parks 2012

POWHATAN HISTORIC STATE PARK



ARKANSAS
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & TOURISM

FICKLIN-IMBODEN LOG HOUSE

THE JAIL

POWHATAN ACADEMY

COMMERCIAL BUILDING

POWHATAN HISTORIC STATE PARK

Powhatan, pronounced "Pow-uh-TAN," drew its name from the Indian chief Powhatan, the father of Pocahontas, whose three empires in the early 17th century covered most of eastern Virginia.

Long before the city of Powhatan was incorporated in 1853, the Osage Indians occupied the area. In 1817, the Federal Government moved them to reservations

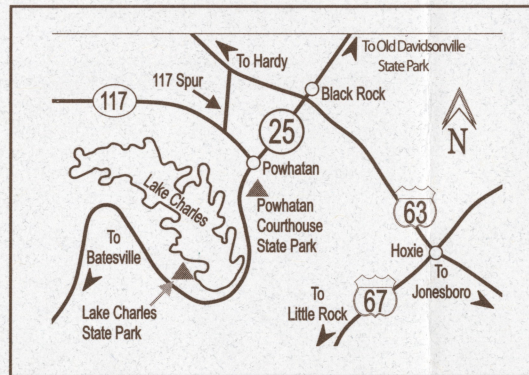
outside the state.

The first steamboat to arrive at Powhatan - *The Laurel* - was in 1829. Cargo and passengers arrived and embarked from sternwheelers and keel boats, and crossed the rivers on ferries. Ficklin Ferry, on the Black River, was once described as "the most accessible point at all seasons of the year from Jacksonport to Pocahontas."

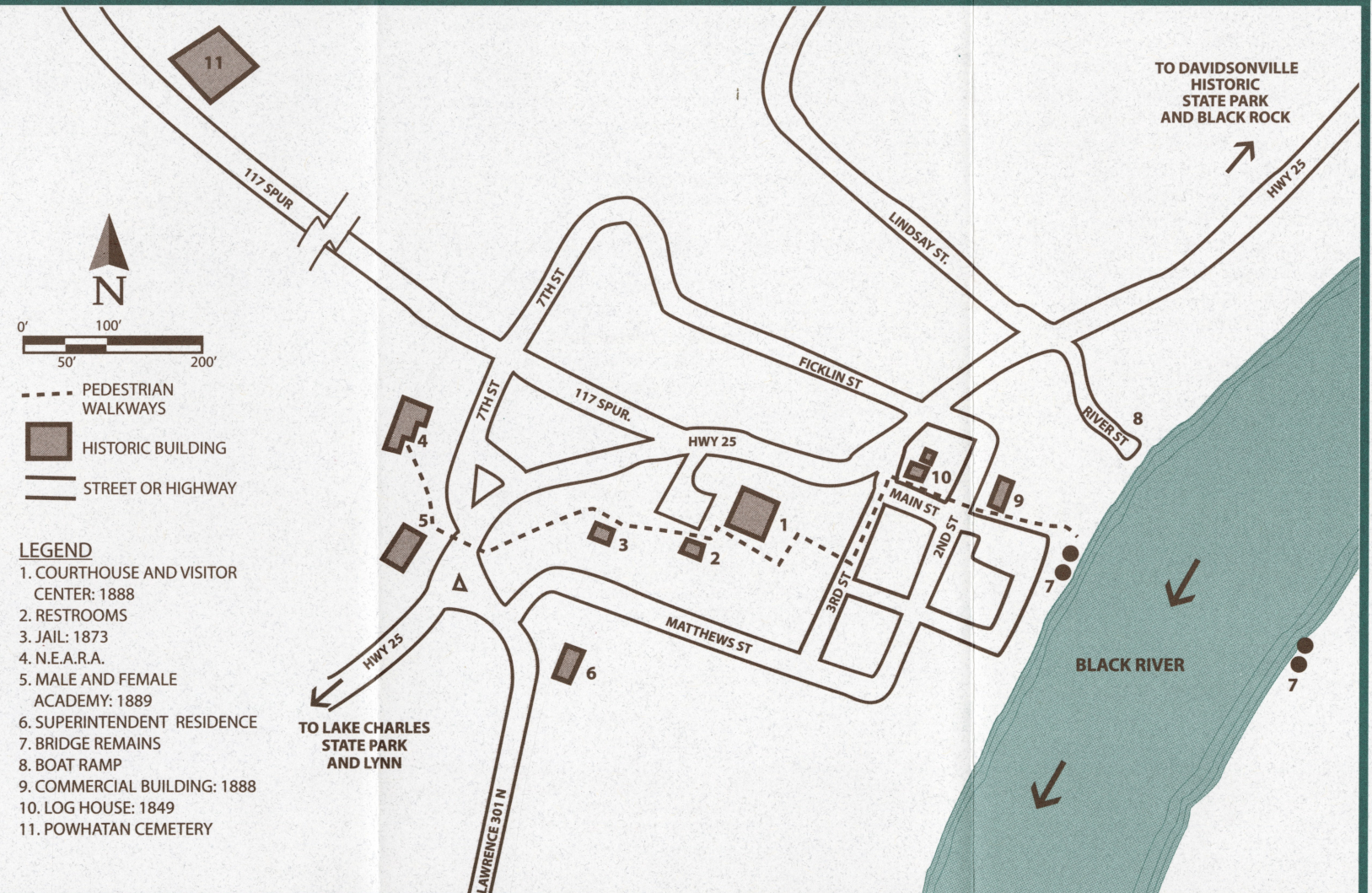
In 1837, John Ficklin established a ferry on the Black River and built a house on the hill northwest of the ferry. Historians give Ficklin credit as the town's founder.

This ferry, later called the Powhatan Ferry, increased in importance into the 1880s, and helped make Powhatan the chief shipping point for a large territory. Steamboat passengers boarded at Powhatan to travel down the Black and White Rivers, then up or down the Mississippi to their final destinations. Steamboats carried passenger and cargo of timber, cotton, game and anything that needed moving from one place to another. Powhatan began its decline when the Frisco Railroad bypassed the town, roads improved, and rail travel began to overtake river passage as the preferred method of transportation.

Key factors leading to Powhatan's transformation from thriving prosperity to quiet existence include changes in transportation, the impact of two world wars, and the Great Depression. The last ferry shut down in the 1950's, the suspension bridge closed in 1951, the school consolidated in 1956, and the county seat moved in 1966.



POWHATAN HISTORIC STATE PARK



EXPLORE THE BEAUTY & HISTORY OF ARKANSAS!